

## **Ties endure**

Former Pullman Mayor Carole Helm was instrumental in establishing a sister-city relationship with Kasai City of Hyogo prefecture, Japan in November 1989. Kasai City and the City of Pullman were matched because of the many similarities between the agricultural university communities. During the intervening years of the sister-city relationship, both cities have worked hard to establish exchange programs, initially among business owners and more recently for their students. The years of friendship between our cities have been marked by goodwill delegations numbering more than 300 people over the years.

Over the years, numerous Pullman host families established enduring international friendships while housing, providing transportation and sharing meals with their Japanese exchange guests. In addition to time with their host families, the Kasai delegates toured city government services, Washington State University, Pullman Schools and other points of interest. Pullman businesses were generous with token gifts to send home with each guest.

For many years, Pullman and Kasai City alternated sending a chaperoned junior and senior high school delegation to visit. The last trip of Pullman youth ambassadors was during spring break 2007, when the group experienced a cultural exchange in Japan. The last Japanese youth delegation visited Pullman in 2008.

Japan is divided into 47 prefectures which are administrative units of Japanese government comparable to our states. Hyogo prefecture and Washington state established their sister relationship in October 1963 to work closely on shared government agendas and issues and simultaneously to gain valuable insight and share key information to further strengthen international ties. The Pacific Northwest has active ties to Japan through the sister cities program, business and trade organizations and the Office of the Japanese Consulate in Seattle.

Kasai Mayor Chozo Nakagawa wrote to Pullman Mayor Glenn Johnson.

I would like to declare that I would do my best for developing the friendship between Pullman and Kasai, which ex-Mayor Kashiwara sowed the seeds and cultivated enthusiastically. Of course, I understand the importance of grass roots exchanges...Best wishes to you and all of

Pullman."